

Letter from Eliza Symonds Bell to Alexander Graham Bell and Mabel Hubbard Bell, From August 4, 1878, to August 6, 1878

Tutelo Heights, Brantford, Ont, Can. August 4th 1878. My dear Mabel and Alec.

I have now two of your kind letters unanswered, and fear you will think I am long in replying. My last writing day was occupied in preparing Australian dispatches, and I have been once or twice from home since I wrote last to you. Grandpapa and I thank you for your united congratulations on the anniversary of our wedding — and especially those of dear Elsie. Bonnie birdie, we wish we had her in our arms. We did not take the trip we intended, the weather was too hot — and we were too much exhausted, thereby, to enjoy anything but sitting in the shade and fanning ourselves. We spent the day at the town house and took a run for three or four miles in a little steam boat that now paddles along the Canal. Although the pellucid stream was nearly the color of pea-soup, the conductor had much to do to steer clear of the groups of little boys bathing and who seemingly delighted to get as near danger as possible. The weather is cooler now and we are ourselves again.

Mr. Kerr has had a very narrow escape from drowning. He possesses a little boat of his own at Danville where the river is very broad. He rowed out by himself one day, and upset the boat. He was too far out to run the risk of swimming to the shore with all his clothes on — so held on to the boat — to which he clung for two hours before he was seen and rescued!! It was reported all over Danville that he had been drowned, but fortunately Lilly did not hear it. She will need her Mamma's attendance again before the latter goes to England!! which will be in Nov., not Oct. as I first thought.

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During the hot weather we had quite a catalogue of mishaps. Our boy — an idle, useless fellow, was to be sent back to the home from whence he came — and not liking the idea of that he took to his heels, one fine morning and ran away — leaving Papa without an assistant — or the probability of getting one for 2 several days. The boy had been very kindly treated too. Next — the two cows with their one year calves ran off. Papa assisted by Mr. Mitchell — had to drive and trot about the country for two or three days, before the cows turned up — and the calves have not been found at all. Next in order of the runs. — were the turkeys and their fifteen young ones. They were absent for several days — and now they, like Sturn's ? Starling, "Can't get out". And accordingly are much disgusted. Poor blind Polly tumbled or slipped off the bank in the orchard down to the dale below — and hurt her leg so much that she cannot be harnessed. The geese were wandering also but they came home, and immediately commenced demolishing a beautiful little fernery that I had under the shade of the vine porch. They have made a complete record of the whole thing. We have got a particularly nice boy now — older than the former ones — and we think Papa will be able to place confidence in him which will be a great relief. He belongs to Brantford and seems rather a superior fellow.

(15th.) Tomorrow Papa and Mr. Henderson are off to Simcoe to lecture on the Telephone.

We are quite relieved at the better information you give of your Sisters health — and hope you have not hurried away from her abode where she derived much benefit, for its minor inconveniences. Thanks my dear for the Elsie — lock. It is very pretty and soft — and I prize it. She may keep her hair — but it is not usual with babies.

You appear to have suffered from the heat as well as ourselves and I think London heat much less endurable than that of this continent. We have had quite a succession of rain storms — as well as thunder storms. Last night there was a constant rumble of thunder without lightning — the thunder was still going on when we arose — and continued all day

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till about 7 seven this evening. I enclose a slip of paper cut out of this days globe — and fear that future accounts will disclose something very serious elsewhere.

We watched the eclipse of the sun — but could see nothing for the clouds. The afternoon did not appear to me to be darker than an ordinary cloudy 3 afternoon. At Quebec I believe the eclipse was perfectly seen.

I have heard from Australia since I wrote last — and hope Alec. has long since — forwarded to his Uncle Edward the documents regarding the Telephone. I quote the information that he is forwarding about the advances other people are making regarding the patent without his having the power to stop it for want of what he asked Alec. to send him. Having that he would himself secure the Patent in Alec's name.

We hope Alec. has succeeded in making the instruments destined for her Majesty presentable.

As you said nothing about Alec's boil in your last letter we hope he has gotten over the ailment — but they very seldom appear without followers. The disturbances are very trying whilst they last — but in general serve to purify the system.

During November Papa delivers a series of Lectures at the Kingston University. It is just possible — if all be well that I may accompany him there.

Longing to see you both — with kisses to Elsie and love to all — from all — your affectionate,

E. G. Bell. P. S. (Friday 6th) The most fearful storm Papa can remember took place here last night. I however slept through it all and knew nothing till this morning. A tree close to Mr. Henderson's house was struck, but as yet we have heard of no other damage.